

AMERICAN CITIZENS SERVICES

American Citizens Services Newsletter

U.S. EMBASSY LA PAZ, BOLIVIA

MAY 2006

As a service to U.S. citizens in or traveling to Bolivia, we are distributing a monthly American Citizen Services newsletter for U.S. citizens. Through the monthly American Citizens Services newsletter, the Consular Section provides information pertaining to consular procedures, policies, and other topics of general interest to U.S. citizens in Bolivia who have registered with the American Citizens Services (ACS) Unit and provided an email address.

If you believe others would benefit from receiving this newsletter, please forward it to them and encourage them to subscribe. To subscribe to our monthly newsletter and receive other updates, please register online by following this link:

<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/> or

<http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/ACS.htm#registration>

If you do not wish to receive this monthly newsletter, or would like to be removed from our email list, please email us at consularlapaz@state.gov or USCit.Services.Bolivia@gmail.com, our new Internet email address exclusively for U.S. citizen services.

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LIMITED HOURS IN LA PAZ ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 17

Due to an in-house function, the Consular Section including American Citizen Services will close on Wednesday, May 17, at 3:00pm/1500. We regret any inconvenience this may cause. For emergency services, U.S. citizens may contact the Embassy at 216-8000.

LILI LEAVING

Citing strictly personal reasons, long-time ACS Assistant Lili Tornee is leaving us effective May 19. We wish her and her family the best of luck in their new ventures. Until we choose her successor, please direct all ACS queries to Cecilia Galvez AT 216-8297, email uscit.services.bolivia@gmail.com. Federal benefits inquiries, including Social Security matters, should be directed to the Federal Benefits Unit of the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina, at email buenosaires-fbu@state.gov, telephone 0054-1-157-77-4510, or through their web site at http://buenosaires.usembassy.gov/federal_benefits2.html.

NO MORE 48-PAGE PASSPORTS

The Department of State has advised overseas posts that 48-page passport books will no longer be printed. Instead, to meet the approximately 300% increase in demand for U.S. passports worldwide only 24-page passports will be printed even as the Department of State continues to implement the electronic passport, which will be available in a 52-page book. U.S. citizens needing additional pages may file that request, free of charge, at the nearest consular office. Please note that visa pages may be added only to current passports in good condition. For more details, please consult our website, [HTTP://LAPAZ.USEMBASSY.GOV/ENGLISH/CONSULAR/SERVICES.HTM](http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/services.htm).

NEW CONSULAR INFORMATION SHEET FOR BOLIVIA

On April 4, 2006, the Department of State published an updated Consular Information Sheet for Bolivia. Consular Information Sheets are usually updated every six months. We emailed the new Consular Information Sheet to our wardens so they could disseminate it to U.S. Citizens with whom they have contact. The new Consular Information Sheet is also available on the Department of State Web site, WWW.TRAVEL.STATE.GOV, and our Web site at <http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/services.htm>.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (IRS) TAX FORMS AVAILABLE ONLINE

The American Citizen Services Unit has received a limited supply of Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax forms for preparing 2005 tax returns. All forms will be available first online at <http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html>. Please note that the Consular Section cannot provide U.S. taxpayer assistance, specifically in preparing tax returns. Rather, all queries should be directed to the IRS using the contact information listed below.

IRS CONTACT INFORMATION

The IRS has a significant amount of information available online, including all needed forms. As there is no one at the Consular Section who can answer tax questions, please refer to the following sources of information:

-- IRS Home Page: <http://www.irs.gov>

-- Citizens Abroad:
<http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international/article/0,,id=97324,00.html>

-- Persons in the Military
<http://www.irs.gov/individuals/military/index.html>

-- Tax Forms and Publications
<http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html>

-- Electronic Payment Website: <http://www.eftps.gov>

-- Refund Information: Go to <http://www.irs.gov>, click on "Where's my refund?"

-- Tax Law Questions: Go to <http://www.irs.gov>, click on "help" in the top menu, click on "Tax Law Questions"

IRS PHONE SERVICES

- Individuals: 1-800-829-1040
- Businesses: 1-800-829-4933
- Customer Service Phone: 1-215-516-2000, M-F, 0600-2300 (EST)
- Customer Service Fax: 1-215-516-2555
- Refund Inquiries: 1-800-829-1954
- TeleTax: 1-800-829-4477
- ITINS after 30 days: 1-215-516-4846
- Exempt Organization Help Desk: 1-877-829-5500
- Tax Offset Program (TOP) Help Desk: 1-800-304-3107
- E-Services Help Desk: 1-512-416-7750

The Fax Service cannot be used to transmit your tax return.

MAILING ADDRESSES

The Philadelphia Service Center services all Overseas filers, including military personnel stationed abroad:

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19255-0215

For Courier Service:

PHILADELPHIA SERVICE CENTER
11601 ROOSEVELT BLVD
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19154

ITIN - to obtain an ITIN:

IRS Philadelphia Service Center
ITIN Unit
P.O. Box 447
Bensalem, PA 19020

URGENT TAX NEEDS

For Collection/Levy Status Accounts Problems:

- Phone: 1-215-516-2004
- Fax: 1-215-516-6931

Taxpayer Advocate Office

- Phone: 1-215-516-2499
- Fax: 1-215-516-2677
- Toll-Free 1-877-777-4778

INTERNATIONAL TAXPAYER ADVOCATE SERVICE

San Patricio Office Center, Room 200
7 Tabomico Street
Guaynabo, Puerto Rico 00966
Phone: 787-622-8931
Fax: 787-622-8933

Fake IRS Email - Scam Alert

We have learned of a phishing email scam that attempts to convince the user that it is from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by using a spoofed "From" address of "tax-refunds@irs.gov". Upon clicking on the link provided in the email, the user is taken to a fraudulent site that looks like a legitimate U.S. government site. The user is then asked to provide personal information, such as their social security, credit card and bank pin numbers. Do not enter any data; do not respond to this fraudulent email.

The US Computer Emergency Response Team (US-CERT) encourages users to take the following measures to protect themselves from this type of phishing attack: Do not follow unsolicited web links received in email messages and be sure to contact your financial institution immediately if you believe your account/and or financial information has been compromised.

For additional information on ways to avoid phishing email attacks, US-CERT recommends that all users review "Avoiding Social Engineering and Phishing Attacks" at <http://www.us-cert.gov/cas/tips/ST04-014.html>. Information is also available on Spoofed/Forged Emails at http://www.cert.org/tech_tips/email_spoofing.html.

NEW VISA INFORMATION SERVICE EFFECTIVE MARCH 30

On March 30, 2006, the U.S. Mission in Bolivia commenced a new visa information service. Persons seeking information on U.S. visa services and requirements, including scheduling a visa appointment, must use this service. This requirement also applies to U.S. citizens inquiring on behalf of their non-U.S. citizen family members or others wishing to travel to the U.S. Case-specific queries, such as why a particular visa was refused, should still be directed to the U.S. Embassy Consular Section at CONSULARLAPAZ@STATE.GOV For further details on the new Visa Information Service, please consult our Web site at [HTTP://LAPAZ.USEMBASSY.GOV/ENGLISH/CONSULAR/NIV/NIVVISASERV.HTM](http://LAPAZ.USEMBASSY.GOV/ENGLISH/CONSULAR/NIV/NIVVISASERV.HTM). As noted in the Consular Information Sheet, U.S. citizens seeking information on Bolivian visa services and requirements should consult the Bolivian Immigration Web site at [HTTP://WWW.MIGRACION.GOV.BO](http://WWW.MIGRACION.GOV.BO) (please note that the Web site is in Spanish).

RENEWING U.S. DRIVERS LICENSES WHILE OUTSIDE THE U.S.

If you find that your U.S. state drivers license is about to expire and you would like to have it renewed, you should contact the DMV office in the state where your current license was issued. Some states will allow you to renew your license while overseas, others will not.

A good place to start your search for information on this process is <http://www.dmv.org>. From there you can link to your state's DMV office website which usually posts information on procedures for renewing your license. Although the U.S. Mission has no role in the renewal process, we can notarize certain documents for you if required by your state for renewal. See below for more information on notarial services that we can and cannot provide.

HOURS AND RANGE FOR CONSULAR SERVICES AT U.S. CONSULAR AGENCY IN SANTA CRUZ AND COCHABAMBA

Effective October 24, 2005, the U.S. Consular Agency in Santa Cruz expanded its public hours. U.S. citizens and others seeking non-visa consular services may come to the U.S. Consular Agency in Santa Cruz Monday from 9:00AM to 12:30PM and 2:00PM to 5:00PM as well as Tuesday through Friday from 9:00AM to 12:30PM, except U.S. and local holidays.

The U.S. Consular Agency in Cochabamba is currently open to the public Monday through Friday from 9:00AM to Noon, except U.S. and local holidays. We will advise U.S. citizens and other consular

customers through this newsletter of any scheduled changes in those hours.

Please note that the consular agencies provide only certain American Citizen Services, such as receiving applications for passports and consular reports of birth abroad that are then forwarded to the U.S. Embassy in La Paz for adjudication and processing. For visa information or assistance, please consult our Web site at www.bolivia.usembassy.gov. If after reviewing the information there you still have specific visa questions, please contact the Visa Unit at consularlapaz@state.gov. Questions concerning American Citizen Services that cannot be answered by the information on the Web site or the consular agencies may be directed to the American Citizen Services Unit at USCit.Services.Bolivia@gmail.com.

HOURS FOR AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES IN LA PAZ EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 1, 2006

Effective February 1, 2006, in order to better respond to our customers and provide enhanced consular services the American Citizen Services Unit will be open in the afternoons only Monday through Thursday, from 1:30PM to 5:00PM, and Fridays from 8:30AM to 12:30PM and 2:00PM to 4:00PM, except U.S. and local holidays. This change will better accommodate school age children, who need to appear in person to apply for new passports, and other clients. To avoid common impediments to quicker processing (such as incorrectly done photographs and insufficient documents), please first check the requirements of the relevant service at <http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/ACS.htm>.

Please note that Federal benefits checks and IRS refund checks, when those arrive, are now distributed by the consular cashier at Window 5 and not the American Citizen Services Unit window. Federal check recipients may wish to come on Friday mornings to collect their checks given that most banks, including the Banco Bisa office at the U.S. Embassy, tend to be open in the mornings and close in the early afternoon.

UPDATE ON ELECTRONIC PASSPORTS

To better facilitate international travel for U.S. citizens and enhance border security, the Department of State is phasing in issuance of electronic passports (E-Passports). The new passport combines facial

recognition and contact less chip technology. The Department of State hopes to have all domestic passport agencies issuing E-Passports by the end of 2006. Previously issued passports without electronic chips will remain valid until their expiration dates. For more information, please consult the Web site of the Bureau of Consular Affairs, Department of State, at www.travel.state.gov and specifically http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/eppt/eppt_2498.html.

WESTERN HEMISPHERE TRAVEL INITIATIVE COMING - APPLY FOR PASSPORTS EARLY

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 requires that by January 1, 2008, travelers to and from the Caribbean, Bermuda, Panama, Mexico and Canada have a passport or other secure, accepted document to enter or re-enter the United States. The Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security are working to implement this legislation. The Department of State anticipates an increase in demand for passport services as part of this requirement, and all non-emergency passports received at overseas posts are processed in the United States. We thus recommend that persons with passports expiring in the next two years apply early to renew those passports in order to receive the new passports in a timely manner. For more information on passport renewal procedures, please visit our Web site at <http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/ACS.htm>. Additional information on the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative may be found at the Bureau of Consular Affairs, Department of State Web site, www.travel.state.gov.

NOTARIAL SERVICES – WHAT WE CAN AND CANNOT PROVIDE

We have included the following information in our monthly newsletters since September 2005 and also conveyed this to the Ministry of Foreign Relations. Because we still receive requests from U.S. citizens to legalize/certify/notarize/stamp documents for use in Bolivia and/or for other notarial services that we legally cannot provide, we are repeating this information on notarial services.

In accordance with U.S. law and regulations, the Consular Section may provide certain notarial services in connection with documents to be used in the United States. Documents for use in Bolivia must be processed by Bolivian authorities, even if the documents originate in the U.S. The Consular Section has advised the Bolivian authorities that we accordingly will not certify documents for use other than in the

U.S. Therefore, U.S. citizens who wish to present in Bolivia their U.S. birth, marriage, death or other civil documents should have those translated in the U.S. and authenticated by the nearest Bolivian Consul. Similarly, U.S. citizens wishing to marry in Bolivia and who require "certificates of singleness" may query the relevant Bolivian Civil Registry office to clarify how that requirement may be met. Some civil registry offices accept a sworn statement in front of a Bolivian judge. Please contact the relevant Bolivian Civil Registry Office for further details. For more information on notarial services provided by the Consular Section, please check our Web site at <http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/ACS.htm>. For information on how to authenticate documents in the U.S., please consult the Department of State Office of Authentications Web site, <http://www.state.gov/m/a/auth/>.

U.S. VOTING INFORMATION FOR 2006-2007 ELECTIONS

The U.S. 2006 mid-term elections are already underway, with the first primaries held in March. At stake are all 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, 33 Senate seats, 37 state governorships, and thousands of state and local initiatives. To assist overseas voters concerning these upcoming elections, the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) has provided an updated Voting Assistance Guide for 2006-2007. We have distributed copies of that publication to the consular agencies in Cochabamba and Santa Cruz, the American Cooperative School in La Paz, the U.S. Commercial Library at the U.S. Embassy (open to the public 0900 to 1200 and 1500 to 1700, Monday through Friday except local and U.S. holidays), and the wardens outside of La Paz. Please note that the standard voter registration and absentee ballot application are available on line at www.fvap.gov as well as at the American Citizens Unit here in La Paz and our consular agencies in Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. All U.S. voting information and forms provided by the Federal Voting Assistance Program is also available on the Web at www.fvap.gov.

PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PREPAREDNESS

The Department of State has asked all overseas offices to ensure that private U.S. citizens realize the need to make their own contingency plans to respond to a possible influenza pandemic. Such contingency planning would include obtaining influenza vaccines, which the USG cannot provide for private U.S. citizens and/or their dependents. For further details, please consult the Avian Influenza Fact Sheet and the related Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) published by the

Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, at http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_1181.html.

INTERNET EMAIL ADDRESS EXCLUSIVELY FOR AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES

In order to facilitate communication with U.S. citizens, we have established an Internet email address exclusively for American Citizen Services. That email is USCit.Services.Bolivia@gmail.com. Please note that "American Citizen Services" does not include visa queries or any matters related to U.S. visas. Visa questions should continue to be sent to consularlapaz@state.gov. Emails received at the American Citizen Services Gmail account that do not clearly concern American Citizen Services may be deleted without a response.

NO MORE AMENDMENTS IN U.S. PASSPORTS – ADDING VISA PAGES STILL PERMITTED

Because we have recently received requests to amend passports, we are reiterating the following information provided in prior newsletters. We regret that the passport amendment information now on our Web site is not current; we are working with the Webmaster to correct that.

As announced by the Department of State on September 19, 2005 and also conveyed through the Embassy's warden system, effective September 26, 2005, as an additional security enhancement, all U.S. passport offices will no longer amend valid passports. Instead, customers requesting name changes, extension of validity for limited passports, or correction of a printing error will apply for replacement passports. These applications may be submitted at the U.S. Embassy in La Paz or through the U.S. consular agencies in Santa Cruz and/or Cochabamba.

If the change is *within one year after issuance*, customers will submit a U.S. Passport Re-Application Form (DS 5504), together with the passport that needs the change, the documentation required, and new passport pictures. There will be no charge for routine processing. Please note that this form may be used only for passports to be printed in the U.S. Emergency passport requests must be submitted on form DS-11 or form DS-82; please read and follow the instructions on those forms to ensure that the proper form is used.

If the change is *more than one year after issuance*, customers will need to submit an Application for Passport By Mail (DS-82), together

with the passport that needs the change, the documentation required, and new pictures. The cost includes the \$55 application fee and \$12 security surcharge, for a total of \$67 for routine processing. Because minor children are not eligible to use this form, changes in children's passports will need to be submitted using the DS-11 form and paying the related consular fees. Of course, if the requested data change is due to a printing error by Passport Services, there will be no charge.

Those only needing to add visa pages to their passports will submit an Application for Additional Visa Pages (DS-4085). This service is always free of charge when routine. Please note that for any passport services for children under age 14, including adding visa pages, the parental consent requirements apply. For more information on these requirements, please consult the Department of State, Consular Affairs, website at www.travel.state.gov or the U.S. Embassy website, <http://bolivia.usembassy.gov>.

All of these forms are available online at www.travel.state.gov. The Passport Amendment/Validation Form (DS-19), previously used to amend passports, will no longer be valid. For more information on applying for a U.S. passport, forms, and a wealth of other international travel information, please visit the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs website at www.travel.state.gov.

EMERGENCY PASSPORTS

Emergency passports are issued in cases of genuine emergencies that require urgent travel. Because of the immediate need for such a passport, the emergency passports issued have a limited validity of, at most, one year and are limited to 24 pages. Emergency passports cannot be extended nor can another emergency passport be issued to replace an emergency passport. Visa pages will not be added to an emergency passport. As soon as possible, the emergency passport should be replaced immediately by applying within one year from the emergency passport's issuance date for a full validity passport at no additional charge.

Regular passports are normally received within 15 calendar days after the U.S. Embassy receives the application then forwarded via DHL to the nearest Consular Agency (Cochabamba and Santa Cruz) or kept at the American Citizen Services office in La Paz for collection. More information may be found at <http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/ACS.htm>

CURRENT TRAVEL INFORMATION

For the most current travel warnings, public announcements, and other travel information published by the Department of State, such as the Consular Information Sheet for Bolivia issued April 4, please go directly to www.travel.state.gov. To receive this information automatically, please register through the Internet-Based Registration System (IBRS) at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs>. More information on IBRS is provided below.

INTERNET-BASED REGISTRATION SYSTEM

U.S. citizens who travel or reside abroad can now register a record of their trip or residence so that the Department of State and/or nearby Embassy or Consulate can communicate with and assist citizens in case of an emergency. Registration is now online, and can be accessed at:

<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs>. If you are already registered with us, please re-register online so that we can update our records. Through this secure, online registration system, citizens can register and update their contact information on the Internet at any time. The website also provides citizens with up-to-date travel information customized to their unique itinerary. The data citizens provide is secured behind Department of State firewalls, accessed only by cleared personnel in Embassies, Consulates, and the Department of State, and releasable only with the U.S. citizen's permission under the provisions of the Privacy Act.

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS AND OTHER CLOSURES

Please note that the Embassy will be closed on the following official holidays in during 2006.

A - American Holiday, L - Local Holiday

May 29 (Monday)	Memorial Day	A
June 15 (Thursday)	Corpus Christi	L
July 4 (Tuesday)	US Independence	A
July 16 (TBD if observed Friday or Monday)	La Paz Day	L
August 6 (TBD if observed Friday or Monday)	Bolivian Independence	L
September 4 (Monday)	US Labor Day	A
October 9 (Monday)	Columbus Day	L
November 2 (Thursday)	All Saints' Day	L
November 10 (Friday)	Veterans' Day	A
November 23 (Thursday)	Thanksgiving	A
December 25 (Monday)	Christmas	A/L

OTHER INTERNET ADDRESSES OF INTEREST TO U.S. CITIZENS

U.S. Federal Government: <http://www.firstgov.gov>

U.S. Department of State, Consular Affairs: <http://travel.state.gov>

U.S. Department of Homeland Security: <http://www.dhs.gov>

U.S. Federal Aviation Administration: <http://www.faa.gov>

U.S. Internal Revenue Service: <http://www.irs.gov>

Social Security Administration: <http://www.ssa.gov>; SSA Newsletter:

www.ssa.gov/eneews/

Federal Voting Assistance: <http://www.fvap.gov>

U.S. Customs & Border Protection: <http://www.cbp.gov> (for information including importation of household pets, animal and plant health inspection, etc)

U.S. Department of Agriculture: <http://www.usda.gov> (for information on food products, food safety and inspection service).

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